

**XI. Remarks upon Two Etruscan Weights,
or Coins, never before published. In
a Letter to Mathew Maty, M. D.
Sec. R. S. from the Rev. John Swin-
ton, B.D. F.R.S. Custos Archivorum
of the University of Oxford, Member of
the Academy degli Apatisti at Florence,
and of the Etruscan Academy of Cortona
in Tuscany.**

GOOD SIR,

I.

Read Feb. 7, 1771. THE first piece to be considered here is an Etruscan as, (See TAB. III. n. 29) or weight, exhibiting on one side the head of Janus, covered with a cap; and on the reverse a club, attended by the mark of the As, and the legend **I40A437**, in Etruscan characters. Between the two faces of Janus, the head of a bufolo, or wild ox, presents itself to our view, as does also a sort of concha marina, or sea-shell, somewhat resembling one on a didrachm of Tarentum, in my small cabinet, and several other ancient coins, contiguous to the cap; both of which have, not a little, suffered from the injuries of time. The letters on the reverse are more

more rude and barbarous than those of any similar Etruscan coins hitherto published, which is an incontestable proof of the exceeding high antiquity of this piece. The forms of several of them are likewise somewhat different from those of the correspondent elements on all the other similar Etruscan weights, hitherto communicated to the learned world. The concha marina, and perhaps the bufolo's head, is a singularity that will announce the weight before me an unedited coin. The piece weighs precisely five ounces, and twelve grains; and is, in all respects, except what relates to the concha and bufolo's head, tolerably well preserved.

The first riches of mankind were their flocks and their herds, and particularly their (1) oxen. Hence the first money in Italy, from pecus, was (2) called pecunia, and the most ancient brass coins had the figure of an ox (3) impressed upon them. Hence also the Greeks, in the days of Homer (4), estimated the value of their properties according to the number of oxen they were equivalent to, as we learn from that celebrated poet. For he informs us, that Glaucus's golden armour was worth an hundred oxen, whereas that of Diomedes, for which it was

(1) Erasm. Frölich. *Notit. Elementar. Numism. Antiquor. &c.* p. 2. Viennæ, Pragæ, & Tergestæ, 1758.

(2) Plin. *Nat. Hist.* Lib. xviii. p. 98. l. 6, 7. & Lib. xxxiii. p. 610. l. 6, 7. Ed. Hard. Parisiis, 1723. Fröл. ubi sup. et alib. *Una lettera del Annib. degli Abati Olivieri al Sig. Abate Barthelemy, &c.* p. 28, 29. In Pesaro, 1757. Ezech. Spanhem. *De Us. et Praestant. Numismat. Antiquor. Dissert. prim.* p. 23. Londini, 1706.

(3) Idem ibid.

(4) Hom. Il. 2. 235, 236, 237. Vid. etiam Eustath. in loc.

exchanged, did not exceed the value of nine of those animals. The figure of the ox on the most ancient money seems to have been soon converted in Etruria into the symbol of the head of that beast connected with the head of Janus, who is (5) said to have first introduced the use of money into Italy. The head of the bufolo, or wild ox, may, as I conceive, have appeared on some of the most ancient coins of Tuscany, and particularly the piece I am at present considering, because the bufolo was formerly, and is still, a native of that country. When I resided there, above thirty years since, the woods between Leghorn and Pisa abounded with them. They were then likewise said to have been very numerous in other parts of Tuscany, and La Romagna; and several of them, at different times, both tamed and wild, I myself have there seen. The reason here mentioned seems to extend to other remains of antiquity of the Etruscans besides their coins, on which the head of the bufolo appears, as the (6) authors here referred to have rendered sufficiently clear.

From what has been observed, as well as from the thickness, high relief, and extreme rudeness of the workmanship, or rather in conjunction with these, we may conclude, that our As is either coeval with some

(5) Cytherius Poet. apud Athen. *Deipnosoph.* Lib. xv.

(6) Anton. Francisc. Gor. *Mus. Etrusc.* Tab. CXXIII. Hamilton's *Collect. of Etrusc. Greek, and Rom. Antiqu.* Vol. II. pl. 63. I have a fine Etruscan Vas Potorium, (See Tab. III. n. 3.) ending in a bufolo's head; which, as I apprehend, formerly belonged to Cardinal Gualtieri: as also another, terminating in (See TAB. III. n. 4.) the head of a gray-hound, similar to one published by Mr. Hamilton, which had likewise a place assigned it in the Cardinal's collection of Etruscan antiquities. I bought both of them of Sig. Barazzi, at Rome, in 1733. Hamilton's *Collect. of Etrusc. Greek, and Rom. Antiquit.* Vol. I. pl. 49.

of the earliest pieces, or weights, ever used in Italy, or but little posterior to them. Father Gori (7) seems to be of the same sentiments with me, in this particular; and neither Sig. (8) Olivieri, nor any other writer, has invalidated, or disproved, what has been advanced on this head, by that celebrated author.

That the weight here considered is to be assigned to a maritime town, the concha marina, or sea-shell, irrefragably proves. I should therefore, with the very learned Sig. Olivieri, rather attribute it to Volterra, than to Velitræ (9), at present called Velletri, as Father Gori (10) seems to have done. For Velitræ was a town of Latium, and much less considerable than the city of Volterra; which (11) was the most ancient city of Etruria, the seat of a lucumo, and one of the most considerable places in Tuscany. It was also a maritime city (12).

(7) Anton. Francisc. Gor. *Mus. Etrusc.* Vol. II. p. 419. et alib. Florentiæ, 1737.

(8) Sig. Oliver. *Una Lettera, &c.* In Pesaro, 1757.

(9) Annib. degli Abati Olivieri, in *Esame della Controversia letteraria, sopra il Museo Etrusco, stampato negli Opuscoli scientifici*, Tom. XXI, et ubi sup. p. 43. The old Etruscan word VELATRI, FELATRI, or FELATERI, seems to have been tolerably well preserved in the name of Monte Veltrajo, or Feltraio, a mountain in the territory of Volterra, and about two miles from that city. This, as I apprehend, may be considered as an additional argument in support of Sig. Olivieri's and Monsignore Mario Guarnacci's opinion. *Notizie Istorich. della citta di Volterra, oper. del Sig. Lorenz. Aul. Cecin. dal Caval. Flamin. Dal Borgo*, p. 44, 49. In Pisa, 1758. Monsig. Mar. Guarnacci, in *Origin. Italich.* In Lucca, 1767.

(10) Anton. Francisc. Gor. *Mus. Etrusc.* Vol. II. p. 427.

(11) Christ pñ. Cellar. *Geogr. Ant. Lib.* II. c. ix. sect. 2. p. 573, 574. Lipsiæ, 1731. Vid. etiam Tho. Dempst. *De Etrur. Regal.* et Anton. Francisc. Gor. *Mus. Etrusc.* pass.

(12) Strab. *Lib. V.* p. 223. *Lutetiae Pariliorum*, 1620.

as we learn from Strabo, being seated not far from the Vada Volaterrana, near the place where the river Cæcina threw itself into the Tyrrhenian sea. I would therefore read the legend, on the reverse of this coin, FELATHERI, FELATERI, or FELATERRI; the fifth letter being (13) sometimes endued with the power of *Theta*, and sometimes with that of *Tau*; and a duplication of consonants, in writing, having been unknown to the most ancient Etruscans. That the vowel E, between the fifth and sixth elements of the Tuscan legend, on the reverse hereon, should be suppressed, or omitted, will not be any matter of surprize to those who are apprized, that such a suppression, or omission, so consonant to the genius of the Hebrew and Phœnician orthography, from which that of the most (14) ancient Etruscans could not have greatly differed, in old Tuscan words, does not seldom (15) occur. Of this MENLE, HERCLE, MELACRE, PHVLNICE, MENREA, which were read ME-NELE, or MENELAE, HERCVLE, MELE-ACRE, PHVLVNICE, MENEREA, or MENER-FA (16), are convincing proofs, to omit many other similar instances, that might, with great facility, be produced. But this is so settled a point, that it

(13) Anton. Francisc. Gor. *Mus. Etrusc.* Vol. II. p. 408, 409.

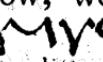
(14) Swint. *De Lingua Etrur. Regal. Vernac. Dissertat.* Oxon. 1738.

(15) Phil. Bonarot. Tho. Dempst. et Anton. Francisc. Gor. ubi sup. passi. Vid. etiam Joan. Bapt. Passer. Pisaurens. *Hellenism. Etruscorum. in Symbol. Litterar. &c.* Vol. II. p. 35—73. Florentiae, 1748, & Carlo Antonioli in *Antic. Gem. Etrusc. spiegat. & illustrat. &c.* p. 70—78. In Pisa, 1757.

(16) Idem ibid.

will not be contested in any part of the learned world.

II.

The second piece, or weight, of which I propose to give an account in this paper, is a stips uncialis, (See TAB. III. n. 5.) as appears both from the weight and size of it, of the earliest date. I received it, as a present, from my worthy friend James Gilpin, Esq; late recorder of the city of Oxford, with several other ancient brass coins. On one side it has preserved the head, or rather a full face, of the * sun ; the workmanship of which is more rude and barbarous than that of any other similar piece that ever fell under my view, and done perfectly in the most ancient Etruscan taste. The reverse had originally on it the prow of a ship, which has been so totally effaced by the injuries of time, that only a very few exceeding faint traces of it are now to be seen. The relief on the face-side is very high, as was undoubtedly at first that on the other ; but the reverse being in a manner quite smoothed, nothing there remains but the vestiges of the prow of a ship, that are barely visible. However, just over the prow, we may discover clearly enough the legend , in Etruscan characters, though but very indifferently preserved. That

* We meet with a full face of the sun pretty much resembling this on a denarius of the Plaurian family, but done in a much more elegant taste ; which demonstrates it to be vastly inferior, in point of antiquity, to the piece I am now offering my thoughts upon. Sig. Havercamp. *Thesaur. Morel.* Tom. II. p. 329. Amstelædami, 1734.

word is apparently equivalent to ROMA, and consequently the piece itself must be deemed an uncia, or stips uncialis, of Rome, though the globule, or uncial mark, has not escaped the ravages of time.

That the piece in question is an uncia of Rome, appears not only from the legend on the reverse, as just observed, but likewise from another uncia of Rome, with the full face of the sun upon it, as here, though done in the more modern Roman taste, now in my small collection. That uncia is likewise, I doubt not, in several (17) other collections; being, as I apprehend, a pretty common coin. The same conclusion is likewise deducible from another Roman uncia, with the word ROMA, just above (See TAB. III. n. 6.) the prow of the ship, on the reverse, in the very same situation as the Etruscan legend on the weight before me, in my little cabinet. We may therefore safely enough pronounce the coin here described a stips uncialis of Rome, of a very remote antiquity, with the Etruscan name of that capital of the world on the reverse.

The Etruscan letters were, undoubtedly, the first alphabetic characters of Italy. Nay, they prevailed at Rome, and in every part of Italy, till after the regisuge. This I have fully proved in a Latin (18)

(17) Scipionis Maffei *Origin. Etrusc. & Latin.* p. 61. Tab. II. Ord. II. n. ii. Lipsiae, 1731. Annib. degli Abati Olivier in *Indice Delle Antichiss. Monete di Bronzo Romane & Italich.* ubi sup. p. 53. In Pesaro, 1757. See Haverc. in *Rom.* Tab. III. n. 4.

(18) *De Priscis Romanorum Literis Dissertat.* Oxon. 1746. Many curious particulars are deducible from the point here insisted upon. To omit others that occur, from hence it plainly follows, that those inscriptions on the Etruscan tables consisting of Latin letters, or the more modern characters of Italy, are dissertation,

dissertation, printed at Oxford, in 1746. The piece at present engaging my attention is an additional, or rather an apodictical, proof of the truth of what was there advanced. It demonstrates the Etruscan letters to have been used at Rome, in very early times; and consequently evinces, in the strongest manner, the principal point insisted upon in that dissertation.

The time when the medal I have been considering first appeared, for want of proper chronological characters, and sufficient light from history, cannot, with any precision, be ascertained. But, from a perusal of the small performance (19) above-mentioned, and what has been offered here, we shall, I believe, be induced to conclude, that it is at least coeval with the regifuge, which happened in the year of Rome 245; or rather, as I should apprehend, that it may be a considerable number of years anterior to that event.

The two brass coins above described being extremely curious, especially the second of them, an Etruscan coin of Rome having never been heard of before; and many curious points being deducible

more recent than the regifuge. Nay, in the dissertation here referred to, they have been demonstrated inferior, in point of antiquity, to the Duilian inscription; and consequently Father Gori must be egregiously mistaken, when he makes all the inscriptions on those tables some generations older than the Trojan war. See the *Universal History*, Vol. XVI. p. 48. Lond. 1748.

It may not be improper to remark here, that the Etruscans had not the letter O in their alphabet, but constantly made use of V for that element. Hence it came to pass, that the Etruscan name of Rome was not Roma, but Ruma, as it appears on my very ancient coin. *Philosop. Transact.* Vol. LVIII. p. 256.

(19) *De Prist. Romanor. Lit. Dissertat.* p. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Oxon. 1746.

from that coin, which I have not time at present even to touch upon ; I was willing to flatter myself, that the short account of them, in this paper, would not be unacceptable to the Royal Society. I have therefore taken the liberty to transmit it to you, in order to its being laid before that very learned and most illustrious body ; and am, with great truth,

Good Sir,

Your much obliged,

and most obedient, humble servant,

Christ-Church, Oxon.
Sept. 29, 1770.

John Swinton.